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Documenting the Cold War

Investigating Available Resources

On March 5, 1946, former British Prime Minister Winston Churchill, accompanied by President Harry S. Truman, delivered a speech at Fulton, Missouri, where he announced:

From Stettin in the Baltic to Trieste in the Adriatic, an iron curtain has descended across the Continent. Behind that line lie all the capitals of the ancient states of central and eastern Europe. Warsaw, Berlin, Prague, Vienna, Budapest, Belgrade, Bucharest and Sofia, all these famous cities and the populations around them lie in what I must call the Soviet sphere, and are subject in one form or another, not only to Soviet influence but to a very high and, in many cases, increasing control from Moscow.

Joseph Stalin, ruler of the Soviet Union, responded in *Pravda*, claiming that Churchill's speech was "a dangerous move, calculated to sow the seeds of dissension among the Allied states." Geopolitically, after World War II Europe was divided between the United and the Soviet Union along the lines outlined by Churchill in his Fulton, Missouri speech.

After a period of time this division was called the Cold War, a term popularized by Walter Lippman, and was used to describe the state of "neither war nor peace" between the Western powers and the Communist nations following World War II. This state of affairs lasted until 1990 when the Soviet Union collapsed and the Cold War and the division of Europe ended.

The history of the years after 1990 present problems for the modern researcher. The rapid dissemination of new information pertaining to the Cold War period and the subsequent military, cultural and political history of the era are too recent for a definitive summary. The amount of material that must be sorted and evaluated is immense. Uncovering records, opening state

archives, gathering memoirs and documenting places and events around the world are time consuming tasks. Ongoing studies, such as the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars Cold War International History Project, are extremely helpful (especially in light of recently-opened Soviet archives), but the interpretation of Cold War criteria can be overwhelming from a cultural resources management point of view, when sites, objects and thematic studies associated with the Cold War confront various federal agencies and historians with issues involving interpretation and documentation strategies.

The Department of Defense (DOD) manages a wide range of cultural resources on its 25 million acres of public land. The cultural resources within them are protected by The National Historic Preservation Act, the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act and the Archeological Resources Protection Act. In 1991, the DOD Legacy Resource Management Program was established under the Defense Appropriations Act of 1991. The Cold War Project emerged from this as one of the Legacy's nine task areas. Broad in scope, the Cold War Project seeks to "inventory, protect, and conserve the Department of Defense's physical and literary property and relics" associated with the Cold War. The history of managing and documenting Cold War resources within the DOD falls under the different branches of the Armed Services. These records prove invaluable research tools.

The Air Force Project originated between the National Park Service and the United States Air Force after the Air Force was taken to court over inadequate handling of their Section 106 responsibilities involving a building at Randolph Air Force Base. The Air Force contacted the National Park Service, and a cooperative agreement was reached where the National Park Service designed the database to handle the historic information gath-

ered at 11 different Air Force installations. GIS (Geographic Information Survey) software was customized for each location, leaving each base with a functional database to enter their historic data. The Historic Preservation Program for Army installations was developed in response to specific federal agency tasks and deadlines set forth in Executive Order 11593, signed by President Richard Nixon on May 13, 1971. The Navy has individual officers assigned to reserve units who gather information for historical purposes.

The end of the Cold War itself affected historic documentation of Cold War sites within the United States. When the military base closings began, Section 106 of the National Preservation Act required that DOD give the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation (an independent federal agency) a "reasonable opportunity to comment" on actions that involve historic properties and applies to properties that have been listed in the National Register of Historic Places, properties that have been determined to be eligible for inclusion in the register, and properties that may be eligible but have not yet been evaluated. A consensus on what constituted significance to Cold War sites had to be determined. It was generally agreed by the Air Force and Army in their intermittent guidelines that Cold War base housing was ineligible for listing. Missile related properties, flight-lines, hangars, and scientific laboratories contribute to a broader understanding of specific historic defense needs and the national defense history as a whole, even when such sites are contributing components of larger districts. Overall, the legacy of the Cold War helped bring about a better appreciation for the military's own recent history. Becoming involved in Section 106 work, the military began a systematic documentation of its own history. Most of the historic research done for the military has been prepared by consultants for the various agencies. The National Park Service's involvement has consisted mainly of assisting the various agencies on various questions of historic interpretation, and matters of a more legalistic nature, developing Section 106.

Strategies for nominating Cold War sites and properties begin with the National Register guidelines. There are four categories of eligibility for districts, buildings, structures, sites and objects found in the National Register Bulletin: *How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation*. The National Register criteria provide for the recognition of historic places that have achieved

significance within the past 50 years; a site or property of that vintage may be eligible if it is of exceptional importance at the national, state, or local level. More than a half century has passed since Winston Churchill made his remarks at Fulton, Missouri and the Cold War's beginnings have passed the 50-year mark. Some Cold War sites entered the National Register of Historic Places due to their exceptional importance in recent history, achieving significance within the past 50 years. Documenting the recent past will continue, as new sources are uncovered, thus helping us understand the events which shaped the Cold War era. Below are listed some useful sources for those investigating this period.

Research Tools

General

- Chafe, William H. *The Unfinished Journey, America Since World War II*, Oxford University Press, New York, 1999.
- Chafe, William H. and Harvard Sitkoff, editors *A History of Our Time, Readings on Postwar America*, Oxford University Press, New York 1999.
- Cook, Linda with Karen Bretz, Brian Coffey, Anna Lee Hewko, and Frank Broderick *Elmendorf Air Force Base Volume 1 Historic Context of World War II Buildings and Structures*, United States Department of the Interior, National Park Service, 1999. Excellent analysis and inventory of Elmendorf AFB, northeast of Anchorage, Alaska. The final chapter details Elmendorf AFB's Role in the Cold War.
- Evans, Graham and Jeffrey Newham *The Penguin Dictionary of International Relations*, Penguin Putnam Inc, New York, 1998.
- Milbrooke, Anne with Patrick Andrus, Jody Cook, and David B. Whipple *National Register Bulletin Guidelines for Evaluating and Documenting Historic Aviation Properties*, U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, National Register of Historic Places, 1998. Guideline which takes the researcher from the beginning of American aviation through rocket technology, offering advice on defining aviation related terms pertinent to the National Register of Historic Places
- Sontag, Shery, Christopher Drew and Annette Lawrence Drew. *Blind Man's Bluff: The Untold Story of American Submarine Espionage*, Thorndike Press, 1999. The end of the Cold War produces a daunting task for researchers shifting through the historic record. A book detailing American submarine espionage during the Cold War.

Walker, Martin. *The Cold War*, Henry Holt and Company, New York, 1993. An overview of Cold War history.

Ramirez, Constance Werner. "A Summary History of the Army's Preservation Program," *CRM* Vol. 20, No.13, 1997.

Cold War International History Project Bulletin
Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, 1000 Jefferson Drive, S.W.
Washington, DC, 20560. With the opening of the Russian archives, a useful source for historians and scholars on numerous issues connected with the Cold War.

Note: Good references for historians include servicewide phone books for compiling histories of the various armed forces agencies.

Specific

Lonnquest, John C. and David F. Winkler. *To Defend and Deter The Legacy of the United States Cold War Missile Program*. USACERL Special Report 97/01 November 1996. A study sponsored by the Department of Defense Legacy Resource Management Program Cold War Project: The definitive study on the impact of long-range and air defense missiles on the American landscape. Cultural resource managers evaluating specific resources will find the bibliography a useful guide.

Stapp, Darby C. "Documenting a Cold War Nuclear Reactor, Attempting Innovation Balancing Historic Preservation Needs with the Operation of Highly Technical or

Scientific Facilities," *CRM* Vol 20, No.13, Stapp's article deals with the documentation of the Hanford N-Reactor Complex, and the cooperation and planning between the Department of Energy and the Washington State Historic Preservation Office. For an approach dealing with technical and scientific matters, it is a good source.

Winkler, David F. *Searching the Skies: The Legacy of the United States Cold War Defense Radar Program*, prepared for United States Air Force Combat Command. June 1997. Excellent study of the impact that the construction of radar stations and command facilities had on the American landscape, exploring patterns, themes, and trends that created, influenced, and formed the backdrop to the Cold War defense radar program.

Useful Web Sites

www.army.mil/cmh-pg

www.history.navy.mil/

www.au.af.mil/au/afhra/hisstud.htm

www.airforcehistory.hq.af.mil

www.cwihp.si.edu/default.htm

www.h-net.msu.edu/~war

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The author thanks Paul Lusignan, Diane Miller, Dr. Harry Butowsky, and Russ Sackett for assistance in writing this article.

Jeane Wharton

Interpreting the Cold War

"When I was growing up [in Milbank], we would always count the missile silos on the way to the Black Hills."

Dr. Steven Bucklin, USD

Images of the Cold War—etched in our national memory—are images of the missile silos, bomb shelters and "duck and cover drills" that once impacted daily American life. The Minuteman Missile was one of the country's most important Cold War weapons, and many historic preservationists are looking to provide future generations with a physical reminder of that time.

Minuteman Background

More than 1,000 Minuteman ICBM (intercontinental ballistic missile) sites were deployed in hardened underground silos across the nation's heartland by 1967. The Minuteman was an inconspicuous, silent sentinel on the nation's landscape.

For almost 30 years, Minuteman missiles served as part of the nuclear triad of land-based ICBM's, submarine-launched missiles, and manned bombers poised to deliver a nuclear warhead to a Soviet target within a half hour. Then, in 1991, with the passage of the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START), the Air Force began deactivating the Minuteman force.